

REGULATIONS FOR EXTERNAL ACADEMIC PLACEMENTS IN OFFICIAL STUDIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ALCALÁ

Approved by Governing Body at its meeting of 25 September 2015

This regulation has been modified in the ordinary session at the Governing Council of the University of Alcalá of June 22, 2017. The modified text could be seen in the Spanish version of the document

Royal Decree 592/2014 (11 July) regulating the external academic placements of university students aims to provide the regulatory development that was pending in the framework of the process of creating the European Higher Education Area. This development was provided for in both Royal Decree 1393/2007 (29 October), which laid down the organisation of official university studies and contemplated the possibility of programming external placements in official undergraduate and postgraduate studies (arts. 12, 2, 12.6 and 15), and in the University Student's Statute, approved by Royal Decree 1791/2010 (30 December), which recognised the right of students to have the opportunity to carry out external placements (art 8).

In this regard, in order to strengthen its commitment to employability and to the training of students in an environment akin to that of their future professional activity, the University of Alcalá recognised the utility and need to offer external placements in its undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. It therefore undertook the necessary regulation by approving the External Placement Regulations for Undergraduate Degrees and the External Placement Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees (decision of Governing Body, 24 March 2011).

The regulations herein unify in a single normative text the regime applicable to each and every external academic placement carried out by any student matriculated in official degree programmes of the University of Alcalá and develops the provisions of Royal Decree 592/2014 (11 July) in such a way that it gives regulatory cover to those points which said Royal Decree remits to the procedures implemented at the discretion of each university.

Article 1. Purpose and scope of application.

1.- The purpose of these regulations is to regulate the External Academic Placements (hereinafter, AEP) of students matriculated in official undergraduate and master's degrees.

Article 2. Definition, nature and characteristics of external academic placements (EAP).

1.- EAPs are a training activity whose goal is to enable students to apply and top up the knowledge gained in their academic training by fostering the achievement of competences that fit them for the exercise of their professional activity, make them more attractive to employers and enhance their entrepreneurial skills.

2.- EAPs can be carried out in the University of Alcalá itself or in collaborating entities such as companies, institutions or public and private bodies at home and abroad.

3.- In view of the training nature of EAPs, their conduct entails no sort of obligations proper to employment, nor may their contents substitute the provision of services by paid employees..

4.- The carrying out of EAPs at the University of Alcalá or in other public administrations, public sector bodies or other public organisations will not be held as a merit for the purposes of civil service recruitment nor be taken into account when computing length of service or recognition of previous periods of service.

Article 3. Goals.

EAPs are intended to serve the following goals:

- a) To contribute to the all-round training of students by topping up their theoretical and practical education.
- b) To enhance familiarity with working methods appropriate to real-life professional activity by testing and applying knowledge acquired in the course of the degree.
- c) To foster the development of technical, methodological, personal and participatory technique.
- d) To obtain practical experience which will assist in entering the labour market and enhance employment prospects.
- e) To foster the values of innovation, creativity and enterprise.

Article 4. Types.

External academic placements may be curricular or extracurricular.

- a) Curricular placements are conceived as compulsory or optional academic activities forming part of the relevant syllabus.
- b) Extracurricular placements are carried out voluntarily during the student's training. While they form no part of the relevant syllabus, they share the same objectives as curricular placements and will be included in the European Degree Supplement.

Article 5. Duration.

1.- Curricular EAPs last for the period set out in the relevant degree syllabus. Every attempt will be made to ensure that timetables are compatible with academic activities or students' representative responsibilities.

2.- Extracurricular placements can last no longer than half an academic year, in accordance with article 5.b) of Royal Degree 592/2014 (11 July), notwithstanding the fact that each faculty board or each master's academic committee may, as and were applicable, stipulate a credit load for extracurricular placements.

3.- With a view to encouraging placements, the different centres are free to suit the offer to the demand as reflected on matriculation and to the accomplishment of the academic requisites for entry onto placements as established for each degree programme.

Article 6. The training plan.

1.- Each EAP takes shape within a training plan which will define the educational aims and the activities to be carried out. In the case of curricular placements, that plan will be set out in the relevant teaching guide.

The definition of those aims will attend to the basic, generic and/or specific competences that students are expected to acquire. For their part, the placement's contents will be designed in a way that guarantees a direct relation between the competences to be acquired and the knowledge already gained in the course of the relevant degree.

2.- In all cases, every effort will be made to ensure that the training plan is designed in line with the principles of inclusion, equal opportunities, non-discrimination and accessibility for all.

Article 7. Collaborating entities.

1.- Any company, association, institution, public or private body or the University of Alcalá itself may be a collaborating entity provided that it offers a training plan that can be given academic validation and which matches the competences stipulated for EAPs in the relevant degree's syllabus.

2.- External bodies hosting University of Alcalá students over several consecutive years will be given recognition as certified collaborators of the University of Alcalá.

3.- The competent Vice-Rector(s) may publish prize competitions to reward entities that can vouch for substantial active collaboration in the area of EAPs.

Article 8. Educational Cooperation Agreements and Placement Agreements.

1.- EAPs in entities outside the University of Alcalá can only be carried out subject to the prior formalisation of an Educational Cooperation Agreement between the University of Alcalá and the collaborator. This agreement will set out the regulatory framework governing both parties in regard of students' practical training.

2.- The agreement will be signed on behalf of the University of Alcalá and of the collaborator by the competent vice-rector(s) and by the legal representative, or delegate, respectively.

3.- The cooperation agreement will be valid during the academic year for which it is formalised and will be continued thereafter unless either party gives express notice of termination or its precise duration is stipulated expressly.

4.- Each placement student will sign the placement agreement, which document shall be attached to the Educational Cooperation Agreement. .

5.- The placement agreement will be completed and signed even if the placement is to be carried out in the University of Alcalá itself.

6.- When for reasons beyond the control of the University of Alcalá and educational cooperation agreement cannot be formalised, the centre responsible for the degree will account for that circumstance and the placement may be carried out provided that the collaborator expresses its acceptance in writing and that the competent vice-rector gives approval.

In addition to the foregoing, when EAPs are carried out abroad, they shall require the approval of the vice-rector responsible for international relations.

Article 9. Requirements for carrying out placements.

1.- In order to carry out undergraduate EAPs, students must be matriculated in the relevant subject and have successfully completed at least half the credits of the relevant degree syllabus, additional degree-specific requirements notwithstanding.

2.- In order to carry out curricula EAPs in master's degrees, students must be matriculated in the relevant subject, additional degree-specific requirements notwithstanding..

3.- Students who complete the credit load of the syllabus while carrying out the placement shall at the very latest finish the placement on the last day of the academic year.

4.- Should the carrying out of a placement be proposed after the degree's full credit load has been completed, a reasoned request to do so should be made and permission sought of the degree's academic director or coordinator. Should such permission be forthcoming, the administrative means will be determined which will allow the student to conserve his or her student status.

Article 10. Coordination of placements, tutors and mentors.

1.- In each centre, a vice-dean or deputy director will take charge of coordinating undergraduate EAPs. Those centres teaching more than one degree may appoint an EAP coordinator for each one from among the degree's teaching staff.

The centre's board may create an EAP Committee in charge of coordinating placement organisation and management. This committee will be composed of the centre's vice-dean or deputy director and the placement

coordinators of each of the undergraduate and master's degrees taught in the centre.

2.- Each placement student will be assigned a mentor, designated by the collaborator, and an academic tutor belonging to the university.

3.- The mentor designated by the collaborator must have ties to the collaborator as well as professional experience and the knowledge required to provide effective mentoring. The mentor and the university's academic tutor cannot be one and the same person.

4.- In the case of undergraduate degrees, the academic tutors will be appointed by the dean of faculty or head of school at the proposal of the placement coordinator. The tutors will be members of departments involved in teaching the degree of which the placements form part. The following criteria must always be complied with:

- a) The academic tutor of curricular placements must be a teaching member of the faculty, school or centre where the student is matriculated, and in all cases familiar with the subjects with which the placement is associated.
- b) The academic tutor of extra-curricular placements should ideally be a teacher in the same field of knowledge as the subject involved.

5.- The academic tutors of master's degrees will be designated by the postgraduate programme's academic committee.

Article 11. Insurance.

Prior to the commencement of placements and with a particular view to foreign placements or those whose very nature recommend greater protection, the University of Alcalá will make available insurance for civil liability and accidents to top up the standard student insurance.

Article 12. Offer and publicity of EAPs.

1.- The EAPs on offer will receive due publicity through virtual media, notice boards and any other means determined by centre managers. Guarantees must be in place ensuring that the number of placements available matches the number of students who may be admitted onto the degree.

2.- Information published about each EAP must include the following data:

- a. Collaborator's name and tax registration number.
- b. Site, town or city and address.
- c. Start date, end date and duration in hours of EAP.
- d. Hours to be worked per day, or assigned working-day or timetable.
- e. Training plan, activities and competences to be carried out and developed.
- f. The EAP's target degree or degrees.
- g. The collaborator's requirements for its placement students, which must be authorised by the placement coordinator.
- h. Amount of financial aid available, if applicable. The collaborator must pay any such aid directly to the student.

Article 13. Adjudication of EAPs.

1.- Preference will be given to students wishing to carry out curricular placements over those requesting extra-curricular placements. When choosing and adjudicating placements, priority will also be given to disabled

students so that they may select collaborators guaranteeing universal accessibility, including means of transport and access to their premises.

2.- A student who rejects a placement or who fails to take up a placement he or she applied for will go to the bottom of the list of candidate students.

3.- Placements that are not taken up will be adjudicated to students who have applied for extra-curricular placements.

Article 14. Matriculation.

Students must formalise matriculation in the officially established matriculation periods. This is an essential requirement for carrying out EAPs as well as for complying with general academic requirements and those specific to the degree in question.

Article 15. Rights and obligations of placement students.

1.- While on placement, students shall enjoy the following rights:

- a) To tutoring by a member of the university's teaching staff and to mentoring by a professional in the employ of the collaborator for the duration of the placement.
- b) To evaluation in accordance with the criteria set out in these regulations.
- c) To carry out academic, training, representative and participatory activities subject to giving sufficient prior notice to the collaborator.
- d) To receiving a report from the collaborator making express mention of the activity carried out, its duration and, where applicable, its performance.
- e) To receive, whenever it is so stipulated, the financial contribution provided for by the collaborator by way of study grant or aid.
- f) To receive information from the collaborator about safety and risk prevention at work.
- g) In the case of disabled students, to dispose of the resources required to gain access to mentoring, information and evaluation, and to carry out the placement in conditions of equality.
- h) In the case of disabled students, to reconcile the carrying out of placements with activities and personal circumstances deriving from or related to their disabled status.
- i) Those other rights provided for in current legislation and/or in the relevant educational cooperation agreements signed by the University of Alcalá and collaborators.

2.- While carrying out their placements, students must take care to fulfil the following obligations:

- a) To abide by current University of Alcalá regulations concerning EAPs.
- b) To be familiar with and comply with the placement's training plan, following the collaborator's designated mentor's instructions and under the supervision of the university's academic tutor.
- c) To remain in contact with the university's academic tutor for course of the placement and notify him or her of any incident.
- d) To complete and submit to the academic tutor the final report of the work carried out and the placement evaluation questionnaire in the prescribed periods. If said documentation is not submitted within those periods, the placement will receive an unfavourable report and the grade of "Failed to attend" for the placement's credits.
- e) To report to the collaborator where the placement is to be carried out on the agreed date, to comply with the timetable prescribed in the training plan, and to abide by the collaborator's operating, safety and risk prevention rules.

- f) To accomplish the training plan and to be diligent in performing the activities agreed with the collaborator along the lines set out in the plan.
- g) To observe strict confidentiality regarding information internal to the collaborator and to uphold professional secrecy regarding their activities both during and after the placement.
- h) To always show respect for the collaborator's policies and to defend the good name of their own university.
- i) All other obligations provided for in current legislation and/or in the relevant educational cooperation agreements signed by the University of Alcalá and collaborators.

Article 16. Rights and obligations of academic tutors.

1.- Academic tutors enjoy the following rights:

- a) To be informed of the regulations regarding EAPs, of the training plan, and of the conditions under which the tutored student will conduct the placement. In the case of disabled students, to receive the information and training necessary to discharge the tutorial function.
- b) To receive effective recognition of his or her activity as academic tutor in the terms established by the University of Alcalá, without that recognition entailing financial remuneration of any kind.

2.- At the same time, academic tutors will be under the following obligations:

- a) To veil for the due development of the training plan, guaranteeing the compatibility of the placement's timetable with students' academic, training, representative and participatory commitments.
- b) To monitor placements effectively in coordination with the collaborator's mentor.
- c) To authorise modifications to the training plan.
- d) To perform the evaluation of tutored students' placements.
- e) To observe strict confidentiality regarding any information obtained as a result of acting as tutor.
- f) To inform the EAP coordinator of any incidents.
- g) To oversee and, when applicable, request the means of support necessary to guarantee that disabled students may carry out their placements in conditions of equal opportunities, non-discrimination and universal accessibility.
- h) To propose the suspension of placements by means of a reasoned written justification directed to the EAP coordinator.

Article 17. Rights and obligations of the collaborator's mentor.

1.- The collaborator's mentor shall enjoy the following rights:

- a) To be informed of the regulations concerning EPAs as well as of the training plan and the terms of its carrying out.
- b) To receive the support required for the accomplishment of the mentor's role.
- c) To recognition of his or her mentoring work in the terms laid down by the University of Alcalá, being appointed, where applicable, Honorary Lecturers in accordance with the procedure set out in the regulations governing that figure.

2.- At the same time, he or she will be under the following obligations:

- a) To welcome the student and to organise the activities to be carried out as established in the training project.

- b) To supervise the student's activities, to guide and to control the carrying out of the placement in a relationship based on mutual respect and commitment to the learning process.
- c) To inform the student about the collaborator's organisation and operation, as well as about relevant regulations, especially regarding safety and risk prevention.
- d) To coordinate with the university's academic coordinator the carrying out of the activities set out in the educational cooperation agreement, including any modifications to the training plan which may be necessary for the normal carrying out of the placement, as well as informing of and solving any incidents arising in the course of the placement and giving permission to attend examinations, tests and other compulsory activities related to the subjects the student is matriculated in.
- e) To write a final report on the work done by the student during the placement.
- f) To furnish any complementary information the student might need to perform the placement.
- g) To provide the student with the material means required to perform the placement.
- h) To encourage and provide opportunities for innovation, improvement and Enterprise on the part of the student.
- i) To observe strict confidentiality concerning any information he or she may have about the student as a consequence of his or her mentoring.
- j) To offer the student help and assistance during the placement with a view to solving issues of a professional nature that may arise while carrying out activities during the same.

3.- The collaborator may suspend the placement if the student fails to fulfil his or her obligations, giving the placements coordinator of academic tutor written notice to that effect.

Article 18. Mentor's final report.

1.- At the end of the placement, the collaborator's mentor will complete a report and send it to the university's academic tutor. The report will contain the number of hours worked by the student and may evaluate the following aspects related to both the generic and specific competences set out in the relevant training plan:

- a) Technical capacity.
- b) Capacity to learn.
- c) Organisational skills.
- d) Written and oral communication skills. In the case of disabled students who find it difficult to communicate orally, the degree of autonomy in this capacity must be indicated and the need for some kind of technical and/or humane aid.
- e) Sense of responsibility.
- f) Adaptability.
- g) Creativity and initiative.
- h) Personal involvement.
- i) Motivation.
- j) Acceptance of criticism.
- k) Punctuality.
- l) Relations with working environment.
- m) Capacity to work in a team.

- n) Other relevant aspects.

Article 19. Student's final report.

1.- At the end of the placement, the student will complete a report and send it to the university's academic tutor. This report will cover the following aspects, among others:

- a) Student's personal data.
- b) Collaborating entity and location of placement.
- c) A precise and detailed description of tasks, work done, and departments assigned to.
- d) Assessment of the tasks performed and of the knowledge and competences achieved in relation to their university training.
- e) Account of problems arisen and procedure adopted to solve them.
- f) Identification of what they have learned from the placement.
- g) Evaluation of the placement and suggestions for improvement.

Article 20. Evaluation of placements.

1.- The academic tutor will evaluate the placements by filling in the corresponding Final Evaluation Report, which will be based on the activities carried out and the achievement of the competences envisaged in the training plan, the mentor's final report and the student's final placement report.

2.- In order to evaluate placements, degree coordinators or directors may also consider the possibility of a student's giving a presentation of the final report before a panel or of any other system of evaluation provided for in the subject's teaching guide.

3.- Marks will be awarded on a numerical scale from 0 to 10, including decimals, and will be accompanied by the corresponding qualitative grade:

- 0 - 4.9: Fail (SS).
- 5,0 - 6,9: Pass (AP).
- 7,0 - 8,9: Good (NT).
- 9,0 - 10: Outstanding (SB).

4.- The degree's placement coordinator will be responsible for signing the official statement of marks.

Article 21. Academic recognition and accreditation.

1.- EAPs will be given academic recognition in accordance with the relevant regulations as approved by the University of Alcalá.

2.- Once a placement has ended and at the request of the student, the university will issue a certificate with the following minimum information:

- a) Certificate holder.
- b) Entity that collaborated in the placement.
- c) Description of the placement, its duration and dates.
- d) Activities carried out.
- e) Other information as the university deems fit.

3.- The European Degree Supplement will include external placements.

Article 22. EAP quality guarantee.

With a view to achieving the proper conduct of placements by students and collaborators, the University of Alcalá has in place an internal quality guarantee procedure in the form of an evaluation system based on the completion of student satisfaction questionnaires and the analysis of mentors' reports. This system affords a global view of the conduct of placements and where their planning may be revised.

Article 23. Social security.

In compliance of Royal Decree 1493/2011 (24 October), students carrying out external placements and receiving monetary retribution will be regarded as assimilated to the general social security regime.

Additional Disposition 1.

External placements related to degrees in the field of health or to teacher training will be governed by the provisions of their specific regulations.

Additional Disposition 2.

All references in these regulations to offices, posts or persons in the masculine gender are to be understood as applicable indifferently to women and to men.

Repeal Provision.

Previous regulations concerning EAPs which oppose, contradict or are incompatible with these regulations, and in particular the External Placement Regulations for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students approved by Governing Body on 24 March 2011, are hereby repealed.

Final Disposition.

These regulations will take effect as from academic year 2015-16.